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1600 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE

A War Left Nixon's Men Groping

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San Clemente, Calif.—Publication of the "Anderson Papers," confidential memos of U.S. strategy sessions during the India-Pakistan war, cast important light on the way President Nixon and his top aide, Henry Kissinger, run the government.

Nixon and Kissinger came into power voicing heavy criticism of the way foreign policy was conducted during the Lyndon Johnson years. They scoffed at what they branded a crisis-by-crisis way of making policy in the past. They derided Johnson's Tuesday policy lunch sessions as lacking preparation and staffing. Together, Nixon and Kissinger constructed a National Security Council apparatus aimed at bringing organization and control to policy formation.

But the secret government memos made public by syndicated columnist Jack Anderson reveal that even the best-intentioned men can get trapped by the real-life trappings of White House power. For the memos show the Nixon men groping uncertainly to fashion policy amid the hectic swirl of crisis. They also show a President's frustration at the realization that he is not the master of the bureaucracy he heads. And they show a willingness on the part of administration officials to mask controversial decisions and actions in secrecy—or at least to camouflage them in less than total candor.

The memos revealed deliberations of a National Security Council committee of high-ranking officials (known as the Washington Special Action Group) at meetings Dec. 3, 4 and 6. The uncertainty of the top officials who attended the meeting is reflected throughout the memos. At the Dec. 3 meeting, for example, Kissinger made it clear that Nixon had already decided to "tilt" U.S. policy and statements in favor of Pakistan. Yet at the Dec. 4 meeting, the memo states that Central Intelligence Agency Director Richard Helms "indicated that we do not know who started the current action, nor do we know why the Paks hit the four small airfields yesterday." The reference was to

Pakistani bombing of Indian air bases. The memo then adds: "Dr. Kissinger requested that by Monday the CIA prepare an account of who did what to whom and when."

The President has prided himself on making decisions after only the most careful and thorough staff preparation, and then relying on his staff to see that these decisions are properly administered. In fact, policy decisions must often be made hurriedly in times of crisis, and under this President, the memos show, the situation is no different.

The President's frustration at being unable to rein the huge U.S. bureaucracy into line was reflected when Kissinger reportedly said at one meet-

ing: "I am getting hell every half hour from the President that we are not being tough enough on India. He has just called me again. He does not believe we are carrying out his wishes. He wants to tilt in favor of Pakistan. He feels everything we do comes out otherwise."

Similarly, the memo also reports: "Dr. Kissinger said that whoever was putting out background information relative to the current situation is provoking presidential wrath. The President is under the 'illusion' that he is giving out instructions; not that he is merely being kept apprised of affairs as they progress. Dr. Kissinger asked that this be kept in mind."

Administrations have long sought to camouflage their intentions by devious words and phrases, comments and no comments. The Pentagon Papers revealed this to be true of past administrations; the Anderson Papers reveal the willingness of the Nixon men to do the same. For example, Kissinger is quoted as having told one meeting that Nixon wanted to holdup "Food for Peace" funds that had been slated for India. At that point, Maurice J. Williams II, deputy administrator of the Agency for International Development, interrupted: "Word will soon get around when we do this: Does the President understand that?" Kissinger replied: "That is his order, but I will check with the President again. If asked, we can say we are reviewing our whole economic program and that the granting of fresh aid is being

suspended in view of conditions on the subcontinent."

The question then came up whether the U.S. should take economic steps against Pakistan, as well as India. Nixon had not yet addressed that problem, Kissinger said. And Assistant Secretary of State Joseph Sisco then suggested: "If we act on the Indian side, we can say we are keeping the Pakistan situation 'under review.'" Kissinger later told another meeting that Nixon had directed that economic aid be cut off only for India and that an announcement on the action on India should be prepared. The memo adds: "At this point, Mr. Williams asked whether some mention should be made in the statement explaining why aid for Pakistan is not being cut off. Dr. Kissinger said that information would be kept for background only."

Also, Kissinger asked at one point whether the U.S. has the right to authorize Jordan or Saudi Arabia (to whom we have previously sold military equipment) to transfer military equipment to Pakistan (to whom we have previously sold arms to Pakistan.) Kissinger was told that could not be done. But he then said that Nixon